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Items for discussion and decision: energy statistics

Energy statistics

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report was prepared at the request of the Statistical Commission at its thirty-sixth session.[a] The report summarizes the conclusions and recommendations of the ad hoc expert working group on energy statistics, which met in New York, from 23 to 25 May 2005, as they were approved by the Bureau of the Commission, including the draft terms of reference of the recommended city group and intersecretariat working group on energy statistics.

The Commission may wish to provide further guidance to the work of the city group and the intersecretariat working group on energy statistics, taking into account the report of Statistics Norway on energy statistics entitled "Oil statistics: a discussion of quality components" (E/CN.3/2006/11) and the two background documents that contain the report of the ad hoc expert working group and the city group on energy statistics.

[a] *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2005, Supplement No. 4* (E/2005/24).

* E/CN.3/2006/1.

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I. Introduction

1. The Statistical Commission at its thirty-sixth session[1] discussed the report of the programme reviewer, Statistics Norway, on energy statistics (E/CN.3/2005/3).

2. The Commission recommended that, given the wide range of technical and other issues covered by the programme review, the Statistics Division convene an ad hoc expert working group to (a) outline priorities for tackling these issues; (b) identify the most appropriate forums within which to address these issues (for example, the city group, group of Friends of the Chair or intersecretariat working group), including relationships with existing bodies; and (c) report back to the Bureau of the Commission with an outline of a specific mandate and recommendations with a timetable.

3. The Commission authorized its Bureau to implement the recommendations of the ad hoc expert working group and to ensure that the implementation of concrete measures began before the next session of the Commission.

II. The meeting of the ad hoc expert working group on energy statistics

4. Following the request of the Commission, the Statistics Division convened the ad hoc expert working group on energy statistics from 23 to 25 May 2005.

5. Seven countries (Canada, China, Denmark, Norway, South Africa, the United States of America and Yemen) and five organizations (Eurostat, the International Atomic Energy Agency, the International Energy Agency, the Oak Ridge National Laboratory Carbon Dioxide Information and Analysis Center and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs) participated. The meeting was opened by Paul Cheung, Director of the Statistics Division. Olav Ljones of Statistics Norway chaired the meeting.

6. The agenda of the meeting and the synoptic table of the issues discussed will be made available to the Commission as background documents.

III. Conclusions of the meeting

7. The meeting agreed on the following main conclusions:

(a) The significance of energy to society, the economy and the environment creates special requirements for energy statistics;

(b) There is a need to strengthen official energy statistics and their link to economic, social and environment statistics at both the national and international levels;

(c) To this end, the community of energy statisticians have to be brought together;

(d) Internationally agreed standard concepts, methods, classifications and definitions for energy statistics have to be developed on the basis of existing guidelines and best practices;

(e) The collaboration of international organizations engaged in energy statistics has to be strengthened;

(f) Training and capacity-building in energy statistics, especially in developing countries, have to be increased.

IV. Recommendations of the meeting

8. To achieve the goal of improving the quality of energy statistics at the national and international levels to better meet the requirements of the users, there is a need to:

(a) Develop global international standards for official energy statistics;

(b) Strengthen official energy statistics as part of the system of national statistics;

(c) Adopt performance measures for countries;

(d) Formalize international collaboration and coordination to reduce response burden and make the most efficient use of existing resources;

(e) Create an international community of energy statisticians.

9. This work should be carried out by two complementary working groups, a city group to contribute to the development of improved methods and international standards for national official energy statistics and an intersecretariat working group to enhance international collaboration and coordination.

10. The meeting agreed on the draft terms of reference of the city group and the intersecretariat working group.

11. The meeting stressed the need for adequate resources for energy statistics at both the national and international levels. It emphasized this need in particular in the case of the Statistics Division.

V. Draft terms of reference of the city group on energy statistics

12. The objective of the city group is to address methodological issues related to energy statistics and contribute to improved international standards and improved methods for official energy statistics by pooling expertise in the energy community.

13. In addressing these issues, the city group should, as a priority:

(a) Identify users' needs;

(b) Define the scope of official energy statistics;

(c) Identify and collect national and international best practices;

(d) Review and contribute to the updating of the United Nations handbooks and manuals on energy statistics;

(e) Identify gaps in the coverage of existing methodologies and develop methodologies to cover gaps;

(f) Adopt links or develop bridges to international standard concepts and classifications in economic/environmental statistics to facilitate the integration and interface of energy statistics with other statistical systems;

(g) Recommend a core set of tables as minimum requirements at the national and international level to satisfy the major users' needs.

14. Members of the city group should be invited from the following circles:

(a) Energy statistics experts from national statistical offices and/or energy ministries/authorities;

(b) Experts from international organizations engaged in energy statistics;

(c) Experts from academia: energy sciences, energy economics, statistics;

(d) Energy experts from the private sector on an ad hoc basis as advisers.

15. The time frame in which to implement these tasks is five years, from 2006 to 2010.

16. The suggested working methods for the city group are electronic discussions and annual meetings.

17. The city group will report annually to the Commission.

VI. Draft terms of reference of the intersecretariat working group on energy statistics

18. The objective of the intersecretariat working group on energy statistics is to enhance the coordination of international energy statistics and the collaboration of international (global, regional and sectoral) organizations with a view to improving the availability and quality of international energy statistics without increasing the response burden on countries and by making best use of resources.

19. In addressing these issues, the intersecretariat working group will give priority to:

(a) Making an inventory of the current data collection, processing and dissemination system of the major organizations working on energy statistics;

(b) Reducing the reporting burden by harmonizing data collection, processing and dissemination, by limiting duplication and/or by building links/bridges between existing energy statistics questionnaires, concepts, methods and timetables;

(c) Improving sharing of the collecting/processing work between organizations and enhancing data-sharing and data transmission once data validation procedures have been agreed and implemented;

(d) Improving the coordination of energy statistics with social, economic and environmental statistics at the international level;

(e) Promoting training and capacity-building and coordinating the related efforts;

(f) Creating joint forums to promote the dialogue of statisticians and the user community;

(g) Raising the profile of energy statistics and energy statisticians at all levels.

20. International organizations and agencies engaged in the collection of energy statistics from countries at the global, regional and sectoral levels and major users of international energy statistics should be invited to join the intersecretariat working group.

21. The intersecretariat working group will act as a permanent body and will report to the Commission periodically.

22. The secretariat of the intersecretariat working group will rotate among the members biennially.

VII. Decision of the Bureau of the Statistical Commission

23. The report of the ad hoc expert working group on energy statistics was submitted to the Bureau of the Commission on 21 July 2005.

24. On 3 August 2005, the Bureau of the Commission approved the conclusions and recommendations of the ad hoc expert working group on energy statistics, including the draft terms of reference for the city group and the intersecretariat working group on energy statistics.

VIII. Actions following the decision of the Bureau

25. A preparatory discussion of the intersecretariat working group on energy statistics was held within the framework of the international energy statistics meeting held in November 2005 in Paris at the invitation of the International Energy Agency. A detailed survey of the activities of the organizations that participated in the meeting was carried out by the International Energy Agency. The survey was based on the recommendations of the ad hoc expert working group. The meeting, which was attended by 24 international/regional/ sectoral organizations engaged in the production or use of international energy statistics, reinforced the need for formalizing the cooperation among the major international organizations with a view to harmonization and improved sharing of work among them. The intersecretariat working group on energy statistics will formally be convened in the second quarter of 2006, when the recommendations from the first meeting of the city group and those of the thirty-seventh session of the Commission can be incorporated into the work programme and priorities of the group.

26. The first meeting of the city group will be held from 6 to 8 February 2006 in Oslo, at the invitation of Statistics Norway. The meeting is expected to draw up a work programme with a timetable for joint methodological work. The report of the meeting of the city group will be made available to the Commission as a background document.

IX. Points for discussion

27. **The Commission may wish to provide further guidance to the work of the city group and the intersecretariat working group on energy statistics, taking into account the report of Statistics Norway on energy statistics entitled "Oil statistics: a discussion of quality components" (E/CN.3/2006/11) and the two background documents that contain the report of the ad hoc expert working group and the city group on energy statistics.**

Notes

[1] *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2005, Supplement No. 4* (E/2005/24).